776 823 782 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for "never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the religious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented, and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being [755] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit. [681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the same spot.

## Faro's Auxiliaries

776 773 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space, on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

551 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the
576 griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, address-
778 ing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus
564 receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people

[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 In case of illness, the ally (senãnku) (2) comes to the patient's
755

2. See p. 119.

side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the [764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

55 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when address-
57 ing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to
539 whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 773 Men's first garment was the skirt of nyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club, gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil

[783]

1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he may be rid of his infirmity. The clothing of a woman in labor, in [844] order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 773 386 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncircumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which

[824]

2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the buguni in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called kolõso mako, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or kami, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the band betokens. In this respect, the buguni symbolizes man's weakness and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing, [155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his illness. Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses also wears the buguni. At the market, in public meetings, he will not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it "never has enough blood," also in certain boli which continually crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the buguni signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The bugunimba (literally, large buguni) or nyedẽ (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The buguni tyekorole which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The buguni nyama (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom of his garment.

791 534 The box is transpierced by two wooden sticks, če kala (literally, man-stalk), recalling the two millet stalks which accompany every dead man into his grave and which are in themselves symbols of the two elders.

791 534 755 When the Soma falls ill, he removes the two sticks from his instrument and places them beside him on his mat, anticipating the position he will lie in the grave. Thus stretched out, "he is in the grave and walks with the two ancestors"; if his condition improves the sticks have liberated him from his illness. He replaces them in the harp only after his recovery.

791 534 The box contains seven pebbles, the number of man (3 + 4) and a piece of copper in the shape of a star symbolizing the word. The Soma may look into the harp through an opening on its side, called šu wo (sorcery hole) or bara dinge (hole of the box), which "permits him to breathe," to see "the ancestor Koumabana, master of the word, and to know the deepest secrets." At the bottom of the instrument another opening, considered the anus, permits the release of all that is harmful.

/224/ A red stain placed on one of the faces, sindera ble (literally, red belt), expresses the fact that the instrument is the object of blood sacrifices like the stone jineworo.

The case is the image, the mask of Koumabana; the two faces, called respectively kini nye, "right eye," and numa nye, "left eye," represent his eyes; the comb, his mouth; the opening, his nose and respiration; the strings, his words. It is also the replica of the tomb and of the first three of the eight ancestors who knew death. Finally, it is the face of the Soma and his tomb.

The instrument must never be touched by a woman; moreover, no one must play it if his intentions are not pure, "if his heart is not clean."

791 533 781 When the Soma plays in response to requests from those who consult him, each sound is a prayer. With his free hand he holds a twig with which he strikes the base. Each stroke is a word. As he plays, images form before his eyes and within him. He touches the cords separately according to their position and in relation to the importance of the question that is being asked. Thus, he pinches modẽ for subjects of little importance: hunt, journey, etc.; fadẽ for that which is concerned with health, procreation, the physical or moral life of the individual; fa for the future, destiny, the private and public life of a man, his

755 "(1) I have stated elsewhere that among Negro beliefs

1. Raffenel, op. cit., p. 463.

the tradition of the state of possession was carefully preserved. One evening I was present at a ceremony designed to drive a devil out of a woman's body. Father Niany, the universal man of Foutobi, was the exorcist. At the first rumor of this event, a throng converged on the woman's hut and I joined the crowd, curious to see what was going to happen. I saw a wretched woman rolling about on the ground in terrible convulsions in the midst of a circle of onlookers who let her thrash about without trying to help and merely watched her movements. There was great excitement when Niany appeared, and the circle opened to let him pass. He approached the woman, touched her, said a few words in a low voice, lifted her and placed her on a mat.

"The woman at once became calm, and father Niany, who seemed not at all impressed by his triumph, withdrew after speaking a few words in her ear. The crowd melted away, also without showing the least surprise at such complete and prompt success. I conclude that such happenings were not at all infrequent and that Niany had a special talent for driving devils out of women's bodies. I cannot [146] say what her trouble was, but when I saw her I thought that she was simply having an attack of epilepsy and I did not recognize the usual symptoms of that dreadful malady in the sort of convulsions she was having."

791 Though he was sure of his art, Niany nevertheless recog-
609 nized its hazards. There is no magician who does not find another who is more powerful. A foreigner, that unknown creature, is a danger, because he may chance to possess secrets which might invalidate the cleverest methods. That is why Niany fears Islam. He has an idea, which to us seems strange, of what Allah may be, as compared to a miscreant like himself and, being persuaded of the continuity of matter, he applies it in a manner that we shall describe in the chapter on Islam.

791 Though he may have his doubts about Islam, Niany is no
609 less suspicious of the maneuvers of the foreigner, Raffenel, who
821 is staying with him.

754 operator can drop it into the food or drink unobtrusively while serving the victim.

Some of the powders are tossed at the victim with a quick fillip and enter the skin through the tiniest abrasions.

All this is accompanied by the direst curses and constitutes what is known as korti su. These poisons act in various ways, some quickly and others slowly. It is said that the su-mugu only takes effect gradually. Its action is to be seen in a certain amount of swelling of the abdomen, which causes death within a few months. There is not a single native who is not terrified of the korti, and there are Europeans who have experienced the dangerous effects.

Some korti are not the effect of manipulations but rather of true spirits of evil set in motion by magic practices. The following is an example of the type called donna, which includes also the so ma sama and su-mugu. The symbol or material representation (boli) of this donna is a kind of ball, not very large. In order to use it, the operator places it on the blade of one of the native mattocks called daba. The spell is worked at night. The spirit is attracted by the sacrifice of a chicken and offerings of kola. The operator utters his curses against the people -- often far away -- and asks the spirit [151] to undertake vengeance. If the spirit agrees, a sound is heard which resembles the noise made by the flight of a dung bettle (1).

[825]

1. I have been told that this is the reason for the fear certain Bambara have of this insect.

This is the genie starting off on its mission. He will fatally sting the enemy during sleep and then return, announced by the same noise of flight as was heard on his departure. If the imitator should go to sleep while the spirit is away, he will himself be killed in the same way as the victim. He must stay awake for the spirit's return and again sacrifice chicken and kola to him.

754 The korti are counteracted by the kana, which are de-
755 fensive weapons, more particularly, curative. Based on the same principles and using similar ingredients, they are essentially

754 [755] designed to neutralize the effects of the korti. It was a kana ' that father Niany used against the snake bites (2).

2. See above, pp. 157-159.

A third category of magic weapons is that of the siri-kun' or "knots." Though not itself a genie, the siri-kun' is at least dependent on a genie, and it is by addressing a vow or an oath to the genie that one succeeds in obtaining revenge or avoiding the vengeance of another.

As its name would suggest, the siri-kun' is something that binds, that is, something that forces or paralyzes. It receives the obligations undertaken and sworn to by individuals in its presence and it will punish perjury. It renders helpless and paralyzes anyone against whom its intervention has been asked.

I have myself seen Bambara clutching a few bits of straw when they came to me to settle some lawsuit or other. They were following instructions and trying to make me submit to the siri-kun', that is, to paralyze my capacity to take action against them (3).

3. The chronicle of Ségou tells of a similar action by Ngolo against Mamari (see p. 53).

All these dealings in criminal magic are performed in an atmosphere of the most disconcerting trickery and hypocrisy; often the most fawning neighbors are the most to be feared. That is why a Bambara [152] likes to have the assurance of a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme). He seeks him and often thinks that he has found him in the brotherhood of one of those all-powerful genii of which we shall have occasion to speak.

788 Rites. There is no magic without appropriate rites, which must be strictly observed. Any negligence makes the operation useless, even dangerous, for the performer. We saw how the initiator who went to sleep while awaiting the return of the spirit he had invoked was promptly killed by the spirit

## Chapter 3

## The Bambara's General Ideas on Human Life

### 1. Sickness

152 In his innermost being the Bambara feels an ever unassuaged
753 thirst for happiness, an intense and pressing need to live for enjoyment; therefore he revolts against all suffering, both physical and mental. It seems unnatural to him, and at the least discomfort a person will state and believe that he is the victim of malice, of an enemy who is taking vengeance, and he immediately blames the world of invisible beings and those who have intimate relations with it.

753 Not only do the Bambara consider sickness unnatural, they consider it a more or less conscious force which comes to torture them. For fear of displeasing it or of displeasing the genie, the superior force which has taken it into its service and is using it as it pleases, they surround themselves with precautions against announcing the sickness of one of their people. When one asks a Negro for news of his health, his first answer will be that he is well, and if a member of his family is confined to his mat in agony, he will still tell you: "Toro si t'âla (1), he is suffering no pain."

1. Toro, "suffering"; si, "not any"; te, "is not"; â la, "on him" (la, "on").

755 The sick have unlimited confidence in their sorcerers, who are all doctors and apothecaries, and they submit blindly and without any argument to their orders and prescriptions. From them they receive herbs and leaves, and the infusions or brews made from these are prescribed as beverages or lotions, but most /45/ frequently the sorcerers rub their clients' bodies and gently stroke them, anoint them with oil and grease and spit on the affected part while reciting a formula. And always, of course, the number of grigris and talismans in the possession of the patient is increased by several items.

●755 The sorcerer consulted by a sick person explains to him the nature of his illness, tells him whether he is the victim of the hatred of a fetish in the service of some one malicious or envious, or of an enemy who is taking his own vengeance; or whether he is the victim of a gnâma, that fluid, that avenging force which every genie, every man, every animal, and both the living and dead possesses. In serious cases the patient is ordered to sacrifice many hens and quite often nanny goats and billy goats, but in cases that are mild or considered so, the remedies are more childish: should I mention a few?

To cure a headache, the sorcerer sticks the blade of his knife into the ground and places a cauri (1) at the base of the handle. After

[436]

1. A small white shell used as small change; at least 40 are needed to make a sou, or 0.05 francs.

having spit on the cauri and the knife handle, he lays his hands on the patient, who gazes at him; he recites a formula, and, if the sick person is not cured when the prayer is finished, he must at least feel an appreciable improvement, and he always says he does: "A kaf'sa san, I feel better now.

The sovereign cure for leucoma, they say, is a pinch of powdered hyena dung placed in the eye. Because it is rare and costly, the remedy cannot be bought by all, and powder of cauri shells is substituted for it. This powder is obtained by rubbing a cauri on the stone for grinding millet, a very long process. In order to apply oneself to the task as the old women do, more than training is needed; it calls for patience, or rather, a passivity which cannot be defined.

In cases of ophthalmia and other eye diseases, the temples, the eyebrows, and the tops of the cheeks are greased with kana mixed with a little karite (2) butter. The kana is always enclosed in a bull's

[37]

2. Karite, or butter tree, Bassia parkii, genus of the Sapotaceae.

[755] hoof or in an ox's horn; these horns and hoofs /46/ are often decorated with cauri, and from time to time the blood of a victim is poured on them. If a disease is a force, a power which torments human beings, the remedy is another force, another power which is opposed to the first and fights against it. In order to obtain the good graces of this second force as well as its efficacy, people feed it with blood. The kana is of general use; it cures all ills a little, and just as each boli fetish possesses a korti, or harmful powder, enclosed in a horn, so also it possesses its kana, or healing remedy. Since there are as many different kana as there are fetishes, and since, independent of these, the sorcerers also have theirs, the kana are legion and cannot be counted. It is impossible to say what goes into the making of a kana, and the Negroes themselves do not know; they know that charcoal powder goes into it, and that is all. A sorcerer of Kolo, n. kolona, much consulted for orchitis, varicocele, etc., etc., uses glow worms dried in the sun and crushed with a handful of wood charcoal.

[752] Wounds resulting from a bruise caused by a blow or a fall are treated by throwing a handful of ashes into them. The ashes are obtained from dry leaves gathered in the evening in complete darkness under trees deep within thickets, and at random and without looking.

To cure a malady called "strained back," one or several snake sinews are worn as a belt. A hen's craw, exposed to the sun for three days and then cut into thin slices and swallowed with all its contents, will develop an appetite for you for the rest of your days, to the point [752] of insatiability. For burns a poultice of rabbit fur and barbs of guinea-fowl feathers is the sovereign remedy.

To treat rabies, the Bambara have no need of the Pasteur Institute or serum. A person who has been bitten by a rabid dog climbs on a nearby bush, a friend comes and cuts it down, the whole thing falls and rolls on the ground, and rabies are no longer to be feared; they are entirely exorcised. A thread on which a cauri is strung, knotted [751] around the loins, protects a child from blackwater fever, and a string with seven or nine knots, called the tafo, when knotted around the neck, will save you from goiter, croup, laryngitis, a persistent cough, etc. The tafo is used in a general way, just /' '/ like the kana; it is employed for almost all illnesses, and there is no malady that it

755 cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one[1] around her wrist or biceps, and a strange tafo it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of magnan -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their crême Simon, and this is the ointment of ointments.

Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

## 2. Death

761 195 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "A sagira a ko, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "A so yélémana, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the korodouga, of the kouéré or koté sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance.

/48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

[1] [i.e. A tafo, a string with seven or nine knots. --Analyst]

754 usually you come back to life and get off with a fainting spell followed
674 by violent hiccups and vomiting (1). For several days afterwards, and

1. Were I not afraid of provoking a smile, I would admit that in February, 1908, having gone to a Da woro, a celebration which takes place six days after circumcision, I was called by the master of the Komo and, when we were alone, he threw korti at me with the usual curses and left. Without doubt emotion as well as the fatigue of the journey and of the previous day had much to do with my reaction, but I immediately felt stomach cramps and held onto the wall so as not to fall. My discomfort lasted from five to ten minutes.

sometimes several months, a malignant fever confines you to your mat, your limbs swell, deep and purulent sores cut into your body, and so you will drag on for months and months, incurable, and a burden to everyone and to yourself.

The korti sometimes strikes you in such an unobtrusive way that you do not feel it entering. You notice it later, when sickness comes, and its nature is declared by the sorcerer, that infallible being who is never mistaken. /55/

754 The Negro is almost without defense against the korti. A person
● 755 poisoned by it must have recourse to a more powerful fetish, and he kills hens and goats in vain, for he seldom finds one. He covers himself with grigris, surrounds himself with talismans, and nothing does any good. Even the two little deer horns hung around his neck remain ineffectual and unable to defend him, holy as may be the powder they contain.

754 Against the dounkono, or poison that is poured into food and
674 drink, a victim not only has recourse to his gods and his grigris, which